

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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46

ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 L-03 NEA-10 IO-13 /033 W

----- 051692

O R 221308Z APR 76

FM AMCONSUL BOMBAY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6359

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOMBAY 1018

STADIS//////////

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH ND

SUBJ: TARAPUR EXPORT LICENSE

REF: STATE 97106

1. THERE FOLLOWS THE TEXT OF A LETTER FROM IAEC CHAIRMAN SETHNA
REPLYING SERIATIM TO POINTS RAISED IN PARA 1 OF REFTEL.

QUOTE. PLEASE REFER TO YOUR LETTER OF 22ND APRIL 1976. THE
INFORMATION ASKED FOR BY YOU IS BASED ON EXTRAPOLATION OF THE
DATA WHICH WE HAVE REGARDING THE OPERATION OF THE CONVERSION
PLANT, BECAUSE WE HAVE NEVER OPERATED THE PLANT ENTIRELY ON
SCRAP. WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO POINT OUT THAT THE CAPACITY OF TH
PWANT TO HANDLE SCRAP IS APPROXIMATELY 1/5TH OF THE TOTAL CAPACITY.

JPLY TO QUERY (A): IF NO ADDITIONAL FRESH UF6 IS AVAILABLE WE
WILL BE RUNNING THE PLANT ENTIRELY ON SCRAP FROM THE FIRST WEEK
OF SEPTEMBER 1976. PRESENT INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE EARLIEST
THE FIRST BATCH OF FUEL BUNDLES MANUFACTURED FROM SCRAP,
AVAILABLE FOR DESPATCH TO THE TARAPUR STATION, WOULD BE SOME-
TIME END-AUGUST EARLY SEPTEMBER 1977.

REPLY TO QUERY (B): RATE OF BUNDLE PRODUCTION WOULD BE RELATED TO
THE RATE OF PRODUCTION OF POWDER WHICH WOULD DROP TO A FIFTH OF
THE NORMAL, THAT IS, WE WOULD BE ABLE TO PRODICT BETWEEN 25 AND
30 FUEL BUNDLES PER ANNUM.

REPLY TO QUERY (C): STARTING WITH A CLEAN PLANT IT WOULD TAKE
APPROXIMATELY FIVE MONTHS TO GET BACK TO NORMAL PRODUCTION RATE
OF ASSEMBLED FUEL BUNDLES ONCE A FRESH FEED IN THE REQUIRED
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QUANTITY AND ENRICHMENT IS AVAILABLE AT NFC. THIS ASSUMES THAT WE

RECEIVE ADVANCE INTIMATION ABOUT SHIPMENT DURING WHICH TIME THE PLANT COULD BE CLEANED OUT TO RECEIVE FRESH HEXA-FLUORIDE. THIS WOULD TAKE A MINIMUM OF TWENTY DAYS OR UPTO SIX WEEKS. THE LONGER PERIOD IS REQUIRED IF THERE IS DIS BLVED SCRAP IN OOE CONVERSION PLANT.

YOURS SINCERELY, (SIGNED) H.N.SETHNA. UNQUOTE.

2. SETHNA MENTIONED THAT HE WILL BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS WITH KRATZER IN PROPOSED PHONCON POSSIBLITY OF SENDING AN IAEC EXPERT TO AMERICA TO ASSIST IN INTERPRETATION OF DATA IAEC HAS BEEN PROVIDING. MAIN OBSTACLES WHICH SETHNA SEES ARE:

A. INCREASING VISIBILITY OF INDIAN CONCERN WHICH COULD GENERATE INDESIABLE PUBLICITY, AND

B. NEED TO INSURE THAT GOI DOES NOT BECOME FORMALLY INVOLVED IN PROCEEDING BEFORE NRC EVEN THOUGH THEIR EXPERT WOULD BE HELPING WITH PRESENTATION OF DATA. SETHNA IS NOT INCLINED TO SEND ANYONE FROM NFC COMPLEX TO WASHINGTON BECAUFE HE FEELS THAT THEY WOULD BE UNABLE TO COPE WITH BROADER ASPECTS AS THIS PROBLEM AND THROUGH EXCESSIVE EMPHASIS ON DETAILS OF FUEL PRODUCTION PROCESS WOULD BE LIKELY TO FURTHER CONFUSE SOME OF THE MORE IMPORTANT ISSUES. HE IS INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT ONLY J.C.SHAH COULD BE TRULY ENFECTIVE. MY OWN VIEW IS THAT SHAH AND SETHNA NOW PERSONALLY HAVE A MUCH BETTER GRASP OF DETAILS OF PRODUCTION PROCESS BUT THEY ARE STILL UNABLE TO PUT IN LANGUAGE THAT I CAN UNDERSTAND REPLIES TO MANY OF THE BASIC QUESTIONS THAT ARE AT ROTT OF OUR PROBLEMS IN PRESENTING THEIRSCASE TO NRC. I RECOMMEND THAT DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY KRATZER OEAR IN MIND PROBLEMS THAT HAVE ARISEN FROM SETHNA'S INSISTENCE ON HAVING HIMSELF AND J.C.SHAH HANDLE ALL OF THESE INQUIRIES PERSONALLY ALTHOUGH BOTH OF THEM HAVE IN SETHNA'S OWN WORDS "GOTTEN FIGURES MUDDLED" AS THEY PROGRESSIVELY DEVELOPED A FIRMER GRASP OF PRODUCTION PROCESS AT NFC. IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO SUGGEST THAT ONE OF IAEC HEADQUARTERS TECHNICIANS IN BOMBAY BUT OF LOWER LEVEL THAN J.K.SHAH WOKLD BE A BETTER CHOICE FOR THIS MISSION. MY OWN EXPERIENCE IN THAT R.VERMA, WHO HAS BEEN RECENTLY EXCLUDED FROM DISCUSSION, WOULD BE MORE USEFUW IN WASHINGTON THAN SHAH, WHILE KRATZER CANNBT MENTION VERMA BY NAVME, HE COULD STRESS NEED FOR EXPERTISE, AND SUGGEST POSSIBLITY OF SOMEONE OF LOWER PROFILE THAN SHAH WHO ISSKHAIRMAN OF ATOMIC POWER AUTHORITY.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TARAPUR, NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS, EXPORT LICENSES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: saccheem
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BOMBAY01018
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760152-1104
From: BOMBAY
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760435/aaaabdpc.tel
Line Count: 107
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION OES
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: 76 STATE 97106
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: saccheem
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 JUL 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <05 OCT 2004 by saccheem>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TARAPUR EXPORT LICENSE
TAGS: TECH, IN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006